

Awakening of India--Talk With British Officials About Conditions in Hindustan--Mohammedans Fear Hindoos



The Mohammedans Want a Share in the Government.



"Our Troubles Come From the Education of Hindoos."

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.
Calcutta, 1910.
Will India break away from Great Britain?

Can the 300,000,000 Hindoos, Mohammedans and others who inhabit her unite her in a rebellion?

What would happen if the British should leave and the government be given over to the natives?

What are the causes of the unrest and what can be done to allay it?

These are some of the big questions discussed here below the Himalaya mountains on the other side of the globe. Let me give you a stray talk or so which I have had with British officials concerning them. My first conversation was with the former private secretary of the viceroy, Col. Dunlop Smith. Every one who knows anything of the India of to-day knows him. He has been connected with the civil service for a quarter of a century and is acquainted with the peoples and the country from Tibet to Ceylon. When I asked him as to the awakening of Asia he replied:

"There is no doubt but that Asia is fast waking up. The whole continent is on its feet. I have seen signs of its rising for years, and now these signs are so evident that he who runs can read them. You call it an awakening. Other people call it unrest. But call it what you please, there is undoubtedly a change going on in the intellectual conditions of this part of the world. You can see it in Japan, Persia, China and Turkey. It is so here, and that with almost every class of our people. India, as you know, is a world. It is a land of many countries and many languages. There is as much difference between the native of the Punjab and the Bengali as there is between the Swede and the Italian, the American and the Turk."

"This awakening is not confined to any one religion," Colonel Smith continued. "It is supposed to be fomented by the Hindoos, but it is prevalent among the Mohammedans as well. One of the leading Mohammedans of the north came to my office in the midst of the war between the Japanese and the Russians. He referred to Japan's victories and significantly said that they meant much for India. When that war was over we received deputations of Mohammedans who claimed certain rights and privileges. They did not get down on their knees with their hands joined in the attitude of prayer, as some other classes of our population might have done, but they asked as though they had the right to ask and with the expectation that their claims would be granted. Since that time this feeling has grown. It has spread, and we are now having demands of various kinds from the representative natives of all parts of India. The situation is serious, and we are trying to handle it seriously."

"Hindoos and Mohammedans. But can the Hindoos and the Mohammedans work together? And will they do so?"

"I think not," was the reply. "Neither trusts the other. We have three times as many Hindoos as Mohammedans. There are 66,000,000 Mohammedans and about 200,000,000 Hindoos. The Mohammedans are afraid that they would lose in any such combination. One reason is the Hindoos are so much in the majority, and another is that their better education and fitness of mind would give them the advantage in any governing body where an educational qualification might be required."

I asked this same question later in the day of one of the viceroy's cabinet. He replied:

"The most of our troubles come from the educated Hindoos, although many of them are still loyal to the government. As to the Mohammedans, they are comparatively quiet, but they want a greater share in the administration of affairs. They are not in favor of any changes which might put the Hindoos on horseback, and they fear that if a representative government should be instituted the enormous numbers of the Hindoos would give them the majority of the offices. You have, of course, read of Lajpat Rai, the anti-government agitator whom we had to ship out of the country."

"He was a native lawyer, a student of the College of Lahore, who believed in India for Indians. He was an eloquent fellow and cold stir up the Hindoos, but he could not impress the Mohammedans. I once heard him make



Lajpat Rai, the Anti-Government Agitator.



Sir Edward Baker, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

an incendiary speech at Lahore. His audience was a mixed body of Mohammedans and Hindoos. He was denouncing the British, and demanding that India should be governed by natives. Upon that a Mohammedan in the crowd cried out: 'When we want a new ruler we won't choose a bayna (tradesman) like you. We would rather have the British.' Well, that is the feeling of the Mohammedans. They have no use for the Hindoos, and especially for the educated Hindoos, who are called the Babus."

If John Bull Left India. "Suppose the British should leave? What would be the result?"

"There is no danger of that," was the reply. "We could not leave if we would. This is a part of our share of the white man's burden, and we must carry it, whatever the cost."

"But suppose?"

"If we should take our army out of the country and give the rule to the natives the result would be anarchy. The country would be flooded with blood and the very people who are denouncing us would be the first to die. The Mohammedans would attack the Hindoos. They would rush down from the Punjab and capture Bengal. The Afghans would march over the border, and take back the valley of Peshawar, which we have wrested from them, and

the warlike Nepalese would loot the Bengalis. The Nizam of Hyderabad would throw his armies into the struggle, and there would be a score of great forces warring upon one another, to say nothing of the feuds between tribes. At the time of the mutiny of 1857 many of the native chiefs took advantage of the occasion to settle their long time feuds."

"These people treasure injuries from generation to generation, and they grasp at such time to continue the vendettas sworn by their ancestors. There would be religious wars and caste wars, family wars and wars of private grievances. The Hindoos would be ground down by the Mohammedans and robbed right and left. The Mohammedans are far the braver as fighting men, and they would welcome the struggle. Indeed, the loss of such a situation could not be described. The rest of the world could not let it continue. We should be denounced for having fled from the duty which God placed upon us; and some other power would rush in and take possession."

Along this same line I have talked with Sir Edward X. Baker, the lieutenant-governor of Bengal. Sir Edward has spent his whole life in India and has held all sorts of positions, gradually rising until he is now near the top. He was financial secretary of the viceroy during the last administration, and as Governor of Bengal he now rules many millions of the most turbulent element among the Hindoos, as well as of other races.

I met him in the lieutenant-governor's mansion at the end of the Maidaan, opposite the viceroy's palace. My question was direct. Said I:

"Does your excellency think the day will ever come when the British will give up this country?"

"No," was the emphatic reply, "and we could not if we would. Our present policy is to govern the people that they will be more and more loyal to us. We are trying to do that. We appreciate the rights of the natives and respect them. You see, we have learned some lessons from our troubles over certain of our colonies in the past. We must have kept the United States as a part of the British Empire, had we handled her properly. We all know that we made a mistake then. We regret it and we will not make another. Personally, I think the United States would be far better off than it is if it were one of our colonies. We should then have a great Anglo-Saxon combination, which could dictate the policy of the world."

To this I did not reply. But a Japanese expression crept into my mind. It was: "It is to laugh."

My conversation with the lieutenant-governor of Bengal here drifted toward finance, upon which he is an authority in the Far East. Said I:

"Suppose you were the absolute ruler of India, your excellency. Suppose you were not controlled by Great Britain, but that you had the same armies and the same administrative machinery that you have to-day, what would you do to better the condition of these people?"

"I would give them a protective tariff. I would encourage the establishment of factories and give them in every way as to the making of goods for India in competition with those of Europe, Japan and other parts of the world. What India needs is industrial development, and a protective tariff would bring that about. As it is we are not controlled by Great Britain, but we are not controlled by the industries of Great Britain. We can levy no duties to speak of upon our imports of cottons. We once had a tariff of 5 per cent, but the Manchester mill men objected, saying that it ruined their trade. They demanded that an equal duty be added to equalize our competition, and the result was that the duty was reduced by 3-1/2 per cent, that amount being levied on all goods made in India. Do you wonder that the na-

tives object? A protective tariff would foster our industries and we could in time build up a mighty industrial empire."

India's Coal and Iron. Could you do this along other lines than the textiles?"

"Yes. There is no reason why India should not make everything in iron and steel. This country has mineral resources which have never been exploited. No one knows what we have. Take our coal. Only a few years ago the people sneered at the coal of Bengal and said it was of no value. We exported more than 2,000,000 tons of that coal last year, and during that time our output was almost 10,000,000 tons. We have a coal field at Bokaro which covers over two hundred square miles and is supposed to contain fifteen hundred million tons of available coal. In the Karanpura fields there are something like nine billion tons, and we have other deposits of considerable value. We have iron not far from the coal, and steel works are now being put up with native capital to manufacture with natives iron and native ore. Within a short time we shall be making steel rails for our East Indian roads. There is no reason why we should not make our own hardware and develop industries along other lines."

"Does Great Britain get much out of India, Sir Edward?" I asked. "The most of the money you collect in taxes is spent here, is it not?"

"Yes, the most of the taxes go back to the country and are used for its improvement and development. Nevertheless, the indirect advantages which accrue from our connection with India are enormous. Our trade with India amounts to hundreds of millions of pounds every year and is profitable. Another thing we have, through our connection is the support of a large standing army. We have over 200,000 troops, of whom more than two-thirds are natives. All this is supported by the taxes, and it gives the mother country a fighting force which is always kept in good training and which can be shipped anywhere upon the shortest notice. At the time of the Boer War our East Indian soldiers were among the first on the field."

"You have been in India over thirty years. Has the condition of the natives improved?"

"Yes, they are far better off than they were when I came. They get higher wages. They have more to eat and more comforts. Their houses are better. When I first came most of them were housed with thatch. Many now have roofs of tiles. Altogether the people are much better off."

"About how many are there in the provinces you govern?" I asked. "Something like 54,000,000."

"What is their condition as to the unrest? Bengal is supposed to be the worst of the most trouble-laden place in which the most trouble-laden people are concentrated?"

"We have had considerable discontent and some attempts at assassination. They tried to blow up a train about two years ago upon which Sir Andrew Fraser, then lieutenant-governor of Bengal, his staff and a number of police were traveling. They made other attempts to assassinate Sir Andrew Fraser. They also threw a bomb at a carriage containing a Calcutta magistrate, who had imprisoned the prisoners of two native journals for seditious utterances, and other bombs have been thrown. Some have been thrown at the viceroy in Agra a few months ago. And then there was the bomb throwing in which Mrs. and Miss Kennedy were killed. I think, however, that we have largely controlled these anarchists and are gradually breaking up their organization. During one of our police raids we found papers which showed that an anarchist college existed and that the anarchists had associates at Paris and also in the west part of your country. We have reason to believe that they are allied to the nihilists of Russia and that their society is based upon that organization."

"To what classes do the anarchists belong?"

"They are mostly students and educated men out of work. Some are religious fanatics, who would like to dispense with us as a religious duty. 'Are you not afraid of assassination?'"

"No. I believe that this class of agitators will soon disappear. I have already given up the additional police allotted for the protection of the lieutenant-governor, and I frequently travel about with no guards at all. I have been touring the country in an automobile, and one cannot well carry guards with a car."

"Has the new reform policy bettered native conditions?"

"I think so. The people realize that we are doing all we can to give them a share in the government. They appreciate the changes made in their favor; and most of them are loyal to us."

Natives and the Government. Notwithstanding the above statement of Sir Edward Baker, the unrest and discontent are growing. The representation given in the new reform revolutionary elements, and they say that the natives should have a far greater share in the government. They claim that the English now hold all the high offices and receive all the big salaries, and in this they are right. According to Lord Curzon, there are about 1,400 government positions, each of which pays \$4,000 and upward a year. Of these all but 100 are filled by British. Of the lower offices, the salaries of which range from \$200 to \$400 a year, about 5,000 are held by Europeans and 5,000 by Eurasians, who more than 18,000 are held by the natives. As to the offices lower than

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these, they are held by the natives, and their wages fall to a rate exceeding small. Take the teachers in the primary schools. I am told that they get something like \$3 a month, and in certain places not more than \$2. It is said that if all the teachers of India could have their salaries raised to \$5 per month they would esteem themselves happy.

A Literary Awakening. This new movement is largely intellectual. Said one of the officials to me this week:

"The unrest is the rousing of the soul of the Indian people. You can see signs of it everywhere. One is in the increased desire for education and another in the native newspapers. The latter have been springing up all over India, and although usually of small circulation, they are having great influence. Already more than 1,000 native journals have been established. There are more than 2,200 printing presses at work, and something like 7,000 different books in the various dialects are produced every year. The newspapers are published in twenty-two different languages and dialects, including Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic, Tamil and others. Some of these papers are in the native states, where they are subject to the rajahs, who suspend them and banish their editors at will. Others are in the provinces under the British rule. There they are practically free from censorship."

"What kind of books do the natives publish?" I asked.

"Every kind," was the reply. "They are writing books on religion, on poetry and the drama. They are turning out histories and biographies, and also treatises on medicine, mechanics, philosophy and law. They issue political pamphlets and books on public questions of various kinds. Many of their books are well written and some of them have a considerable sale."

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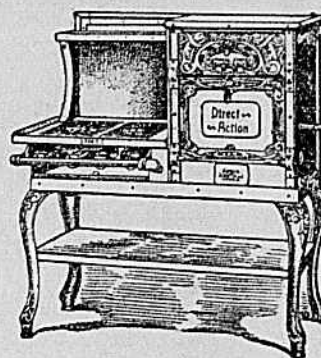
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